

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MC-02 ACDA-05 OMB-01 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 EUR-12 SAJ-01 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 /082 W

----- 038424

R 061340Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3377

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 1666

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: ESTC,HBEXP, BTIO, SY

SUBJECT: PRIVATE SYRIAN INTEREST IN ARMS FACTORIES

REF: 10 FAM 180-82

1. SUMMARY: PRIVATE SYRIAN TEXTILE FIRM OF AHMAD BDEIR REQUESTS NAMES OF US FIRMS TO ERECT TURN-KEY PLANTS IN DAMASCUS FOR PRODUCTION OF PISTOLS, HANTI-TANK AND ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES, GRENADES, EXPLOSIVES AND OTHER MILITARY EQUIPMENT LISTED BELOW. BDEIR CLAIMS SAUDI FINANCIAL BACKING AND SARG APPROVAL FOR SUCH VENTURES IN SYRIAN PRIVATE SECTOR. EMBASSY REQUESTS GUIDANCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH MUNITIONS CONTROL PROCEDURES, PARA 5 BELOW. END SUMMARY.

2. MEDIUM-SIZED PRIVATE SYRIAN TEXTILE IMPORT/EXPORT/WEAVING FIRM OF AHMAD BDEIR (THREE BDEIR BROTHERS) CALLED ON EMBASSY MAY 5 TO DISCUSS INTEREST IN OBTAINING NAMES OF US FIRMS TO JOIN WITH BDEIR IN TURN-KEY ERECTION IN DAMASCUS OF COMPLETE PLANTS WITH APPROPRIATE MACHINERY/EQUIPMENT FOR PRODUCTION OF FOLLOWING:

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A. PISTOLS, TYPE UNSPECIFIED;

B. ANTI-TANK MINES AND ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES;

C. GRENADES AND SHELLS (LATTER DEFINED AS HAND-THROWN,
NOT FOR ARTILLERY);

D. EXPLOSIVES, INCLUDING GLYCERINE, GUNPOWDER, TNT,
AND DYNAMITE-GELATINE;

E. CADMIUM-NICKEL BATTERIES AND CELLS;

F. BARBED WIRE AND CONCERTINA WIRE;

G. LINEN BELTING FOR UNIFORMS;

H. CANVAS FABRIC FOR TENTS FOR MILITARY;

I. STEEL AND FIBERGLASS INFANTRY HELMETS.

3. THROUGH HIS SECRETARY/TRANSLATOR, AHMAD NABAWIEH (CAIRO ENGLISH LIT. GRADUATE, 1964), BDEIR CLAIMS TO HAVE CONSIDERABLE UNIDENTIFIED SAUDI FINANCIAL BACKING. NABAWIEH SAID FIRM HAD CALLED ON BELGIAN AND FRENCH EMBASSIES BUT WITH NO SPECIFIC RESULTS. THEY CLAIMED NOT TO HAVE CALLED ON SOVIET EMBASSY GIVEN PROBLEM OF SAUDI FUNDS WHICH WOULD NOT BE USED TO ESTABLISH SOVIET ARMS AND OTHER LISTED FACTORIES IN SYRIA. MOREOVER, NABAWIEH CLAIMED MUCH OF THE MATERIAL PRODUCED WOULD BE SOLD OUTSIDE OF SYRIA, MENTIONING SAUDI ARABIA, JORDAN, AND IRAQ. FOR THIS REASON, NABAWIEH SAID SARG WOULD ALLOW SUCH FACTORIES IN PRIVATE SECTOR RATHER THAN USUAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUCH MANUFACTURE UNDER MINISTRY OF DEFENSE'S INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENT.

4. COMMENT: BDEIR FIRM HAS BEEN IN TEXTILE BUSINESS SINCE AT LEAST 1963, MOVING TO SMALL-SCALE PRODUCTION AFTER NATIONALIZATION OF SYRIAN TEXTILE INDUSTRY. FIRM HAS BOTH COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL REGISTRY NUMBERS WITH SARG. WE CANNOT JUDGE VALIDITY OF CLAIMED SAUDI BACKING OR SARG APPROVAL OF SUCH VENTURES IN PRIVATE SECTOR. ANY SUCH TURN-KEY PRIVATE INVESTMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE KNOWN TO SARG
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EVENTUALLY, HOWEVER, GIVEN INVESTMENT AND IMPORTATION RULES. BDEIR FIRM IS WELL AWARE OF USG CONTROLS ON EXPORT OF SUCH EQUIPMENT AND REALIZES US FIRM WOULD HAVE TO OBTAIN EXPORT LICENSE.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: WE WOULD APPRECIATE GUIDANCE ON RESPONSE TO THIS REQUEST FOR INFORMATION, PARTICULARLY WITHIN DEFINITION OF "USUAL COURTESIES" NOTED IN 10 FAM 182-C:

A. SHOULD WE SUPPLY BDEIR WITH NAMES AND ADDRESSES
OF APPROPRIATE US FIRMS TAKEN FROM OUR COMMERCIAL
DIRECTORIES?

B. BDEIR WOULD ALSO LIKE US TO PRESENT HIS INTERESTS
IN FORMHOF TRADE-INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY CABLE SO AS TO
REACH MORE US FIRMS VIA USDOC. WZ DON'T BELIEVE THIS IS
NECESSARY IN THIS CASE, BUT WOULD APPRECIATE COMMENT ON
SUCH PROCEDURE AND WHETHER IT FALLS WITHIN "USUAL
COURTESIES."

C. BDEIR HOPES TO HAVE OUR REPLY BY MAY 15.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INDUSTRIAL PLANTS, ARMS PRODUCTION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975DAMASC01666
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750158-0665
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750574/aaaacqap.tel
Line Count: 129
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 10, 75 FAM 180-82
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 JUL 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <05 DEC 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRIVATE SYRIAN INTEREST IN ARMS FACTORIES
TAGS: ESTC, BEXP, BTIO, SY
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006